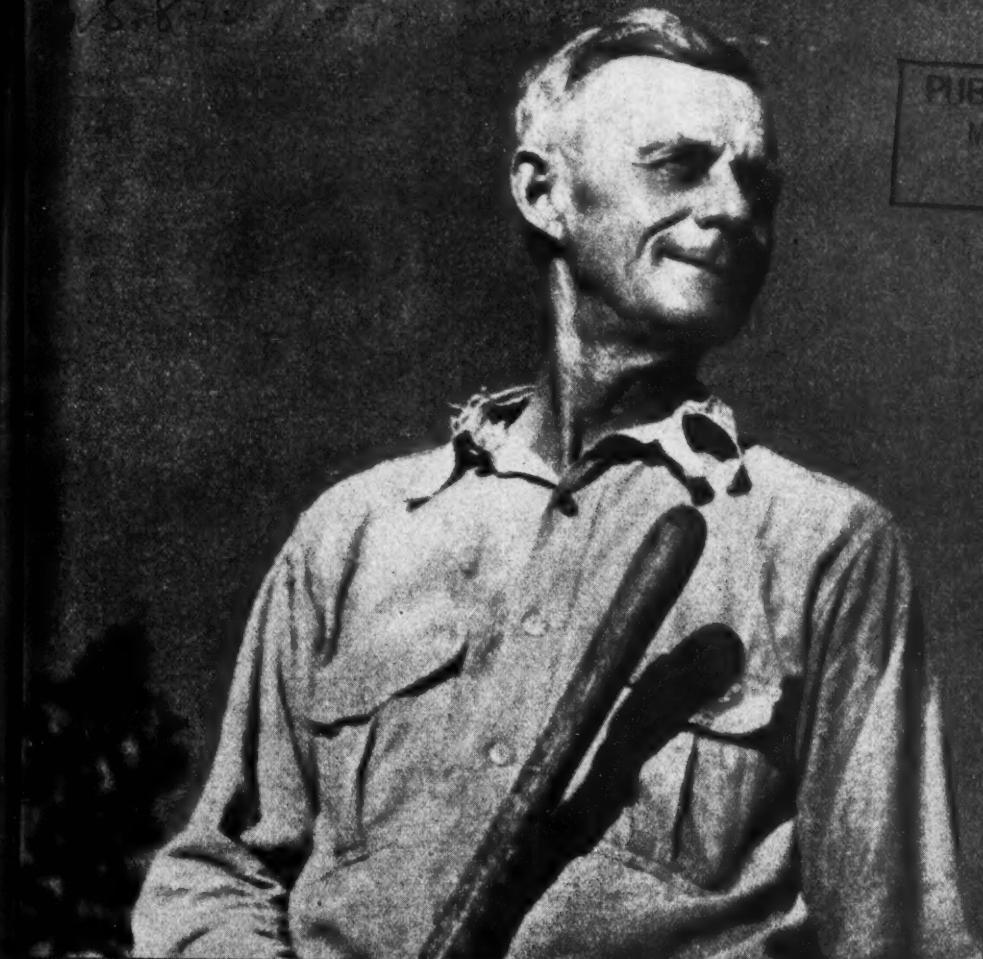


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CONSUMERS' GUIDE

APRIL 25, 1938



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VOLUME V, NUMBER 2

A Publication of the

**Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Consumers' Counsel Division
D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel**

Issued Every Two Weeks

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U. S. Department of Agriculture . . . Washington, D. C.
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EIGHT YEARS AGO some fathers and mothers, living in a small town in Arizona, took a serious problem to the scientists in their State experiment station—headquarters of much valuable research for consumers, told about in our last issue.

These parents were troubled by the fact that all the children born and raised in that community had disfigured teeth. The enamel of their teeth was mottled. Mottled enamel shows up most commonly in dull chalky-white weak teeth—chalky white all over or in patches. More severe cases have pitted or corroded teeth, or teeth discolored by yellow or brown streaks or patches. Mottled enamel usually means continual dentist bills and false teeth eventually.

Could the scientists tell these parents why this condition should be so general in their community, and was there anything that would prevent this blight to the health of their children?

Experts at the Station listened sympathetically. Offhand, they didn't have the answer. It might be that the children's diet was at fault. Poorly formed teeth sometimes betray a diet lacking in calcium or phosphorus or the vitamins needed for building teeth. But maybe the trouble wasn't diet. To find the sure answer they

asked a nutritionist at the Station to turn herself into a scientific Sherlock Holmes and solve, if she could, the riddle of the disfigured teeth.

That nutritionist and her helpers have solved the riddle now. Not only that, but they have discovered a simple inexpensive way to protect children's teeth from that cause of disfigurement. For the children who now have mottled enamel on their teeth, there is little to be done. The defect is permanent.

Villain of the piece, it was found, was too much fluorine in the drinking water. As little as 1 part fluorine in a million parts of water may damage the enamel of teeth as they are forming, yet drinking water in certain sections of this country contains as much as 12 to 18 parts fluorine to a million parts water. In 24 States, as well as in every country of the world, native-born inhabitants of certain sections suffer from teeth deformed by fluorine. In this country, people in the arid States of the Southwest—Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico—are most in danger of this sort of tooth damage because fluorine compounds are likely to be more concentrated in the water.

People who do not begin drinking water containing fluorine until after

their second teeth come in, it has been found, do not have mottled enamel. But the fluorine may still affect the dentine of the teeth which the body keeps nourished from the blood stream.

Not content merely with discovering the cause of mottled enamel, the nutritionist went in search of some way to prevent it. Other people had been working on that problem. Preventive methods they had developed cost too much or could be used only by a skilled chemist. What was needed was a method both cheap and easy to use at home.

Back in 1893 a French chemist discovered that fluorine had what he called an "affinity" for bone. That gave the Arizona scientists the idea of filtering water through bone. They purchased bone from a packing house, cleaned and boiled it, then treated and ground it to just the right fineness for the fluorine to act most effectively. Tests showed that when water filtered through the powdered bone it was practically freed of fluorine.

To round off their job, the scientists devised a bone filter that can be fastened to the home water faucet to treat the water as it runs out. The amount of powdered bone needed depends on how much fluorine there is in the water. Roughly, a pound of untreated bone, which costs a cent at the packing house, is enough to take care of 113 gallons of most fluorine-containing water. And by simple treatment this powdered bone may be used again and again.

CONSUMER TIME in summer time over the air comes at 1:30 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, instead of 2:30. Up-to-the-minute hints on wise spending for the family chancellors of the exchequer are broadcast every Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 in a consumer program sponsored jointly by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Consumers' Counsel Division of the AAA. This program, carried out of Washington by the nationwide Red Network of the NBC, brings timely advice on buying problems. Tune in on this weekly help to budgeteers.



Agriculture's New Road Maps

Farmers try a new route to better business methods for them and steadier supplies for consumers

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THERE ARE 6½ million farms in this country. Some of them are rich, lush lands. On others, the bones of the earth burst through the thin skin of soil, leaving little nourishment for growing things. Some farms are vast expanding acres. Others are small plots of a few acres. Some farms have soil and climate that favor one crop; some, another. Trim and well-planned, some farms show that the resources behind them are ample, the hand and brain presiding over them are skilled and orderly. Others betray the poverty, ignorance, or indifference of their masters.

On these farms live more than 32½ million people. Their chief source of livelihood is the sale of the products of their land. Many can grow their own food. Some will eat only if they



can buy the food produced by other farmers. For most of them, if they are to buy clothing, household necessities, the tools for living and work, nonfarm people must buy their products. City people must buy enough farm products and pay enough for them to yield a sum that will keep the great farm plant at work. The living of a hundred million people depends on the farm plant working efficiently.

Now, here is a strange fact. The amount of food which consumers in this country buy from one year to the next (barring years affected by serious drought) scarcely changes. In 12

4 years, the largest change up or down from one year to the next was 4 percent. In most years the change was less than that. When drought does not occur, the total quantity of farm produce is a remarkably stable figure.

The quantity so consumed is not as large and is not made up of the kinds of foods nutritionists would recommend for a first rate national diet. What we are talking about here is not an ideal, but a fact—a very stubborn fact apparently.

With a seemingly rigid market for their produce, it would seem that all farmers would have to worry about would be the size of consumers' pocketbooks. Those pocketbooks are a major cause of concern. But they are not the whole problem of farmers. Lump sum figures sometimes obscure, rather than illuminate, problems.

● SUM TOTALS of farm produce consumed may remain roughly the same size, but from year to year there are big changes in the amounts of different kinds of foods consumed. Because farmers, like so many doctors, have become specialists, depending for their living on one or two or three crops, what happens to the market for their specialty is more important to them than what happens to the market for all farm produce. But the price level in general for farm produce depends on how small or how big are consumer pocketbooks.

Simply put, the central problem of farmers is the difficulty of individually planning production so that supplies of each crop will neither glut the market nor short change consumers with such small supplies that prices soar beyond consumer reach.

All business has this problem of neatly fitting supplies to consumer pocketbooks, but for 6½ million competing farm producers it is vastly more difficult than for corporate businesses arbitrarily controlling production or output.

Our economic system says to the man who produces an electric toothbrush that fails to find a buyer: "The world can get along without your gadget; you had better turn your talents to something more salable if you want



to make a living." But to farmers who grow the stuff that keeps all of us alive, to be as stern as this would be suicidal.

Unlike factories, land and livestock cannot be closed down and deserted during years of poor business, unless both farmers and the Nation are willing to pay for serious permanent losses. Furthermore, farmers—much more than factory owners—have to cope with the weather. The same acre and the same labor may produce 200 bushels one year and only 100 another. A factory can run at full tilt even if the sky is raining cats and dogs.

Selling problems for farmers are different, too. A farmer who specializes in one crop for his income often has to sell when the crop is harvested. He can't wait for his pay. If he is forced to sell at a time when few buyers are around and prices are low, he





FARMERS who grow basic farm products—cotton, wheat, tobacco, corn, and rice—can put their business in order under the new AAAAct by cooperating in plans to conserve soil; to adjust acres to market and reserve needs; to store surpluses from big crop years for use in poor crop years; to regulate marketing so that too abundant supplies, bringing too low prices, do not make poor consumers out of farmers.



goes on short rations or none at all until the time for another harvest rolls around. He can't change the calendar to suit his pocketbook. Unless he belongs to a cooperative which manages his selling problems, he cannot afford a skilled salesman to watch ticker tapes while he is at work in the fields. Competing with hundreds of thousands of other producers, separated sometimes by hundreds of miles, he can't control his shipments to market so as to hit it when it's highest.

Bitter experience has proved to farmers, as it has to many city work-

ers, that working overtime doesn't always bring in more cash. Many farmers used to work overtime with a vengeance. They worked both themselves and their land overtime. The result was that although more acres of wheat were harvested in 1929 than in 1926—for instance—wheat farmers received \$120,000,000 less for their labors.

● UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT, through the AAA 5 years ago, gave farmers a chance to join together for cooperative planning of production

and marketing wheat, cotton, corn, and other products, farmers were working overtime because they were still producing for markets that had disappeared.

Take the case of corn producers. Because of the automobile, truck, and tractor, the number of horses and mules in this country for which feed is needed has dropped from 29 to 17 million. This means a decrease of 200 to 250 million bushels in the home market for corn.

Vegetable oils during the past 20 years have been increasingly used in food products and have supplemented

6 the use for lard. Improvements in feeding methods have cut the amount of corn required for feeding hogs by 100 million bushels. Similar improvements in feeding dairy cows, beef cattle, and poultry have occurred.

Foreign markets have shut down on the amount of hogs or hog products they buy, so that farmers have lost an outlet for about 100 million bushels of corn.

All these losses of markets more than offset the increase in population at home during the same period.

When the reward for overworking or overproducing is a 50 percent cut in income—which is what happened to the income of corn producers from 1929 to 1932—it's a foolhardy worker or producer who voluntarily keeps it up.

Farmers kept it up because, individually, they couldn't help themselves. Because each farmer had to meet high costs which did not shrink as his prices were shrinking, he worked his farm as hard as he could and made it produce as much as it could. Consumers, here and abroad, could not pay prices that compensated farmers for their efforts. Farm incomes inevitably suffered.

● THESE WERE the conditions that led farmers in 1933 to ask Congress to permit them to cooperate through the AAA.

May marks the fifth anniversary of collaboration of Government and farmers in the job of putting the Nation's farm plant on a sound business foundation. During that time, as AAA Administrator Tolley has said, "Farmers have learned to use the Government as the common instrument of pooling human energies."

In the 5 years of cooperation in attacking the farm problem, farmers have had demonstrated to them another rule of sound farming. Merely to plant enough crops to meet normal market demands in one year is not a safe rule for agriculture.

In 1934, farmers had planted enough crops to supply the feed necessary to keep meat supplies up to normal. But a ruinous drought came along and reduced corn supplies (along with other foods) by one billion bushels. In 1936, farmers again planted enough

crops to build up meat supplies reduced by the earlier drought, but again drought slashed corn supplies by one billion bushels.

Humans are not clever enough yet to predict far in advance what the weather will be, and farming depends on weather. Safety for farmers—and for the people who depend on farm supplies—can come only if there are stored up in good years reserves of food and feed supplies which can be drawn on when bad years come.

● SOUND BUSINESS principles of farming in a price system such as ours, then shape up this way: Gear production so that short supplies will not result in prices too burdensome to consumers; farm the land so that not only waste of land is stopped but the richness of the soil is replenished; insure against weather and market risks so that losses in poor crop years can be compensated for by supplies carried over from good years. Six million farmers, competing among themselves, cannot put such principles to work. Only cooperatively can these become the working rules of an industry like farming.

Now farmers are off on a new lap in their march toward economic security. They have some new road maps. The master map is the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. Four other measures supplement this Act. Together, they are designed to point the way for all farmers to the goal of profitable farming which will exhaust neither their energies nor their resources, which will result in prices encouraging the profitable use of both, which will insure a more even flow of farm products moving into consumption year after year.

Basic to the new farm program is soil conservation, established as a National policy in 1936, and made permanent in the new AAAct. Two out of every 3 farmers cooperated in this conservation program last year. In this part of the farm program, all farmers—whatever crop they grow—are again invited to join. Again payments are offered to those who can give evidence that they have saved and replenished their soil resources by

balancing soil-depleting crops with soil-building crops, and by using more scientific methods of farming. Payments are so scaled that small farmers will get more liberal rewards, large farms not so large payments as before, and the top limit for any individual payment is fixed at \$10,000.

For 5 kinds of farmers who have especially difficult problems, there are new provisions. These are the growers of wheat, cotton, corn, tobacco, and rice. Congress has said to these farmers: The Nation will give you special inducements to control the production and marketing of your products.

First the AAA will estimate for you the number of acres which it believes will yield amounts of food and fiber which can be sold at home or abroad, plus the amount needed to carry over to the next year. Normal carryover has been increased to include an extra reserve amount as a granary to offset effects of bad growing weather. The total, the AAA will call your "national acreage allotment." Each national allotment will be apportioned among the States, counties, and farms with the advice and help of farmers' committees.

● BEST-LAID estimates do not always come true. Unpredictable weather may confound the situation, sometimes to reduce, sometimes to swell the average amount of produce that an acre will yield. Some farmers may not wish to cooperate in this farm program, and their production may upset the plans. If estimates go awry, and the amount of these 5 crops which is produced threatens to swamp the market or leave too great a surplus, another protection is available.

An election is held. Farmers go to the polls and vote on whether they wish to limit the supplies which shall be marketed for that year. If two-thirds of the farmers producing one crop vote "Yes," the AAAct provides that a marketing quota shall be in effect for that crop. This quota represents the total amount of cotton, let us say, that all the cotton growers may market. A quota which has been approved by two-thirds of the cotton

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FARMERS MAY WORK their own children, but not other children under 14 years of age, in beet fields, if they want to qualify for benefit payments under the 1937 Sugar Act.

growers becomes binding on all cotton growers, whether they went to the polls or not. Each farmer is apportioned his share in the total quota.

Come marketing time, cotton growers can sell all the cotton provided for by the quota. Any farmer may sell more than his quota, but if he does so he must pay a penalty on each extra pound. (Small producers of lint cotton are exempted from this rule.) For cotton, the penalty is fixed at 2 cents a pound.

•PENALTIES discourage overselling, but there is more positive help to the farmer who wishes to keep from dumping all his cotton at once on an oversupplied market. Congress has provided that such a farmer shall be entitled to a loan from the Government. With a loan, the farmer is enabled to hold some of his crop off the market until another year when perhaps the weather will play tricks and farmers will harvest a poor crop. Loans serve another purpose in preventing prices, threatened by a slump, from permanently dropping below fixed levels. No loans are to be made available when farmers vote against marketing quotas.

For wheat farmers the new AAA

creates a system of insurance, as well as loans—the first crop-insurance plan ever attempted in this country. Its purpose is to protect both farmers and consumers from shortages in poor crop years. It is expected to work much the way accident insurance operates.

Wheat farmers who wish to be insured pay to a government-created corporation premiums in wheat, or its cash equivalent. If crops should fail, because of drought or flood or crop disease, this corporation agrees to pay back to insured farmers the actual amount of wheat, or its cash value, by which their crops fall below the insured amount. This reserve fund of wheat, laid aside in good years, becomes a drawing account for its owners and indirectly, for the Nation, when crops are poor. By leveling down the peaks and filling up the valleys of supplies, it is expected to steady the income of growers and the prices consumers pay for wheat products.

Here, in brief, is the plan for wheat, cotton, tobacco, corn, and rice producers: (1) National acreage allotments, apportioning the number of acres which the Act indicates is desirable to plant; (2) a bonus to each grower who adheres to his allotted acreage, provided he adopts the soil-

conserving practices recommended for him; (3) marketing quotas when supplies threaten prices, but only if two-thirds of the farmers interested favor such restriction; (4) penalties to any farmer who oversells his quota; (5) loans to farmers who need help in carrying over reserves from one year to another; (6) crop insurance for wheat growers.

7

Already cotton and tobacco farmers have voted a resounding "Yes" favoring the fixing of marketing quotas for cotton and most of the different types of tobacco. Out of a total of 2,300,000 cotton farmers eligible to vote, two-thirds went to the polls. Of these two-thirds, 92 percent asked for a cotton-marketing quota. Eighty percent of the growers producing two types of tobacco went to the polls to cast their votes in the first tobacco referendum. Eighty-five percent of these cast a "Yes" vote for tobacco quotas.

● AID AND DIRECTION in their marketing and financing problems come to farmers in other Acts. There is the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937; the surplus commodities purchase program operating since 1933; the Commodity Credit Corporation, with its credit facilities available to any farmer meeting certain requirements, created as an extension of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1937; and the Sugar Act of 1937.

Marketing agreements and orders help the growers and shippers of nuts and fresh fruits and vegetables to regularize the flow of their products to market. Their price problem is to avoid alternating gluts, which wipe out producers' earnings, and shortages which whoop up consumer prices.

These highly perishable foods must move to market quickly or they are lost and their growers with them. Marketing agreements are drawn up between the Secretary of Agriculture and the shippers of these products. If growers approve of such agreements, the Secretary then issues orders requiring all shippers to abide by the rules of the agreement. The Secretary may also issue orders for the purpose of stabilizing milk marketing.

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Look to Your Pots and Pans

Well prepared food needs efficient kitchen equipment. Here are some tips for the buyer of cooking utensils

IT IS all very well to wax lyric over the color and tone of kitchen things, but where money is tight it's wiser to let walls and curtains express your aesthetic urges and to be a hard realist about pots and pans. Their first job is not to look pretty but to work efficiently and long. How well they perform depends first on the task they must do; next, on how well they are designed to do it.

A good kitchen rule to follow is to buy a pot or a pan according to the purpose for which it is intended. Boiling and braising of foods require a strong direct heat focused on the bottom of the pan. Frying also requires strong heat which is evenly distributed and not so centralized as to risk burning or scorching. Oven roasting and baking require varying degrees of heat evenly distributed but not directly applied. To meet these different demands of scientific cooking, the housewife must know which type of kitchen utensils best serve her purpose. Out of the experimenter's laboratory have come pots and pans of aluminum, enamelware, nickel-alloy, oven glass, iron, stainless steel, copper, earthenware, and china. They are of different thickness, weight, structure, and design. Knowing the characteristics and properties of the materials is one key to knowing how to choose and use your pots and pans.

The scientist says a cooking utensil absorbs heat by conduction, radiation, and convection. He means that heat

reaches the contents of the utensil through direct contact of the material of the utensil with the surface of the heating unit, by the heat waves set up by the incandescent burner such as a glowing electric coil, and by contact with the hot gases rising from the burner. Cooking qualities of a pot or pan depend primarily on their ability to absorb, conduct, reflect, and retain heat.

Aluminum utensils absorb heat readily and distribute it evenly. They are comparatively light and immune to ordinary rust and chipping. Compounds in certain vegetables and boiling water and melting soap, result in stains on the surface of the metal. Scouring with a fine abrasive such as steel wool and rinsing well will remove some of the stains they leave and will also eliminate all traces of salt on the surface of the metal. (Salt left on the surface will result in "pitting" of the metal.) Where scouring fails to remove stains, boil some strongly acid food such as rhubarb, apples, or tomatoes, or water and vinegar in the stained utensil. Strong alkalies in soap should not be used to clean aluminum.

A drawback of poorer grades of aluminum is "pitting." Roughening develops on the surface of the metal when impurities are present. "Pitting" also results even in the best quality aluminum if foods are allowed to remain in them for any length of time.

Two kinds of aluminum utensils are on the market: those made by casting

the molten metal in forms; and those made of sheets of the cold metal stamped into various types of pots and pans. The cast ones—Dutch ovens, kettles, skillets—are firm, durable utensils which hold the heat and, with the proper care, retain their luster. Best for long, slow cooking, they are heavier than those made from stamped aluminum. Poor grades will soon discolor and the surface may become severely roughened.

Stamped aluminum utensils—ranging from ring molds to large frying pans and roasters—are excellent, provided they are not too thin, for cooking at high temperatures with even distribution of the heat. Cheaper than cast aluminum, so-called "heavy sheet aluminum" is considered the equal of cast aluminum by some housewives. Thinner sheets are used for pie, cake, or muffin pans. These will warp, dent, or bend out of shape if of poor quality. The very thin are ideal for individual molds and cutters but, used in the oven, may result in scorching of the food cooked in them.

Pure aluminum sheet is too soft for general service as cooking utensils. Such utensils soon become dented and bent out of shape. In the best utensils the aluminum is strengthened by the addition of a small amount of an alloy metal. Aluminum pans that can be easily bent when new are usually short-lived.

Do not place empty aluminum utensils over a hot flame.

Enamelware heats and cools rapidly, cleans easily, is smooth, attractive, and inexpensive. Alkalies and acids stain cheaper grades. Better grades resist food acids and alkalies. Made by fusing the enamel on a steel or iron base, it is ideal for saucepans and other utensils in which the food is either completely liquid or is stirred while cooking. Poor quality enamel will chip or crack if not handled carefully or if subjected to too rapid changes in temperature. Since enamel is essentially glass, small chips may sometimes break off into food during the time it is cooking. Stirring with a metal spoon may scratch and discolor the surface of an enamel pan; use a wooden one.

Buy enamelware that is smooth, without telltale myriads of little cracks on its surface, and so rigid as to resist pressure of the hands. An exposed base, or air bubbles on the surface are warnings that enamelware is badly made. Though scientists have not yet been able to make a porcelain enamel that is completely immune to chipping, a high quality product, handled properly, will give good and long service. Never expose an empty enamel pan to a direct flame, and never allow a liquid in it to boil completely dry.

Hot soapsuds are best for cleaning enamelware. If necessary some of the milder cleaning powders may be used.

Tinware absorbs heat rapidly, cools promptly and heats evenly. Made of steel or iron coated with a film of pure tin, its quality is determined largely by the thickness of the coating and the quality of the base metal. Tiny holes in the coating are danger signals for the wary buyer; corrosion and rusting follow in their wake. Well-made tinware, not expensive, is considered by expert cooks as ideal for pie, cake, and baking pans. It should never be overheated. Be careful not to remove the tarnish resulting from long use and remember that strong food acids eat away tin. Wash it in soapsuds with careful use of scouring powder. Dry very thoroughly.

Cast iron, because it heats slowly, and holds the heat well, is ideal for slow cooking. This staid workhorse among metals has few rivals for dura-

bility, economy, and as a good heat retainer. Used in frying pans, skillets, kettles, and Dutch ovens, it will actually improve with age if well cared for.

Knowing how to "cure" (remove the lacquer surface from) a new iron utensil is a long step towards guarding it against its greatest enemy, rust. One expert says it should be scoured thoroughly when first bought, washed well in soapy water, rinsed and dried. Then cover the entire surface with tallow grease or cooking oil and put the utensil in a warm oven for several hours. Wash it again in soapy water and dry it thoroughly before using. The utensil should be soaked often, scoured when necessary, and dried completely over a warm stove or in a warm oven after each time it is used. If you are storing it for several weeks or months, rub the surface with tallow or oil when you put it away. This must be washed off when the utensil is once again put in use.

Utensils of earthenware and semi-porcelain are adapted to long, slow baking, and find greatest favor in baking puddings, custards, meat pies, and

the like. Heat does not crack them because they do not expand or contract markedly with changes in temperature. They should be smoothly finished with a non-absorbent glaze, and guaranteed to withstand high heat which often produces the network of fine surface cracks housewives are familiar with. Sudden changes in temperatures are apt to be their undoing, but they will not break if heated slowly to a high oven temperature. Never place one just out of the oven in a refrigerator or under a cold stream of water.

Generally what holds for earthenware and semi-porcelain holds also for oven glass. However, manufacturers of oven glass are now making a product tempered to withstand quick changes of heat. For that reason, they can be used over an open flame, but the flame should be evenly distributed over the bottom of the utensil. A possible objection to glass baking dishes is that food sticks to them and usually they must be soaked before it can be removed. After soaking, they can be scrubbed with scouring powder.

BUY POTS AND PANS that are sturdy, firmly constructed, with flat bottoms and sides that go straight up and down, and with no superfluous edges to harbor dirt and germs. Handles should be securely fastened and attached at a comfortable angle.



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Stainless steel utensils, containing a high percentage of nickel and chromium, are meant for hard wear, will not lose their bright finish, rarely dent, and will withstand intense heat. However, they tend to heat unevenly and must be watched to avoid scorching. Acid and alkalies do not affect them and they rarely have to be polished. For those whose budgets can afford it, this type of cooking pot is a good domestic investment. Utensils of nickel alloy, known as monel metal, have most of the same domestic assets as stainless steel.

Copper utensils still find their way into some kitchens and are without equal as heat conductors for cooking. But they have definite drawbacks. They are difficult to keep clean. Even slightly acid foods will attack them if allowed to remain in them very long. Copper pots should be kept highly polished all the time.

Purchase pots or pans for long-run rather than immediate economy. Initial expense may prove money-saving through years of service and savings in cooking costs. Poorly made utensils rarely pause long on their way to the junk heap. A general rule to follow is to buy light utensils for quick cooking, heavier ones for the longer processes.

For quick boiling on the top of the stove, choose a fast heating pan, such as one of enamel or pressed aluminum of medium thickness which will not dent.

For oven roasting, select a roaster with a smooth interior surface and a rack to hold the meat. With the exception of veal, most meat roasts have been found to cook best in uncovered pans. Enamel and thin aluminum make good roasters for quick cooking. Heavy aluminum, steel, and iron are best for long slow oven cooking.

For baking cake and muffins, experts say you should use tin or glass containers. Aluminum and enamel rate second.

For cooking cream puffs, and baking powder biscuits, tin baking sheets have been found most satisfactory. If you want an evenly browned product, use sheets minus sides. Kitchen researchers have found that sides act as a



TIN CONTAINERS rate high for making tasty muffins. Not only do they shorten the baking time, they also insure an evenly browned product. Oven glass is as good as tin but lengthens the baking period.

baffle to the heat, cause the bottom of the cookies or biscuits to brown much more rapidly than the top.

All pots and pans should be sturdy, firm, well-balanced, welded or riveted strongly enough to avoid later difficulties. If for use over burners—particularly gas or kerosene burners—they should have a flat bottom that will cover the entire burner and will not warp. Their sides should go straight up and down; they should not be flared.

Well-rounded corners and edges, particularly on the inside, prevent the harboring of dirt and food, as do smooth rims bare of any crevices. Seamless, simply designed utensils, with a smooth, well-polished finish both inside and out make for convenience.

Science has long maintained that utensils whose bottoms are black or of satin finish absorb heat more evenly and more rapidly than those with shiny bottoms. Though the saving in fuel is slight, it becomes a significant

factor in using electric stoves. If you do choose a pan whose bottom is on the dark side, ask for a guarantee for the black finish.

Handles should be firmly fastened or welded, immune to heat, and placed at a comfortable angle. Long ones may overbalance the pan; short ones can result in painful burns. If made of wood or synthetic heat and fire-proof materials, the metal shank which attaches them to the body of the pan should be firmly constructed. Remember wooden handles, though comfortable to the hand, char easily.

Welded spouts mean fewer excess edges to collect dirt, but clinched or riveted ones result in economy of price and meet ordinary demands if well-constructed. Spouts should be wide enough to facilitate cleaning them on the inside.

Covers of kettles, pots and pans are an item in cooking efficiency. They should fit perfectly. Examine the lid carefully to see that it is not warped and is heavy enough to rest securely.

Standardizing Containers



Behind the movement for standards to identify quality in goods are achievements in defining standards identifying quantity

MORE THAN 300 years ago when this country was no more than a mote in the eye of the world, a legislative assembly met in "James City"—now known as Jamestown, Virginia—to consider, among other things, the problem of false measures.

Gathered in this assembly were 10 representatives. They came from legislative districts located on both sides of the James River between what are now Richmond and Norfolk. Four years before, in 1619, they had met for the first time, the original legislative assembly of America. At the meeting in 1623, a law was passed ordering "that there be no weights nor measures but such as shall be sealed by officers appointed for the purpose."

Weakness in the administration of this earliest of American weights and measures laws became evident in time. Eight years after it was adopted, history records, a supplement became necessary, and in the records of 1631

there appears another law. This time the legislators "ordained and established, that whosoever shall use or cause to be used any unsealed barrels or bushels after the feast of St. John Baptist, next ensuing, shall forfeit 13s 4d and sett on the pillorye, and the measure and barrell deficient shall be broken or burnt."

● HISTORIES of trading are crowded with evidence of the struggle toward common standards for goods which would be understandable by buyers and sellers alike: standards of price, of quantity, and—more recently—of quality. It is no 20th Century discovery that fair trading is possible only when buyer and seller agree on the terms of the sale: on the price to be paid, on the quantity and quality of goods to change hands.

Indeed so basic to fair trading did early traders consider a uniform system of weights and measures that there

stands in the first article of the Constitution of the United States a provision giving the Congress "power . . . to fix the Standard of Weights and Measures."

Strange as it may seem, not even yet—150 years after the Constitution was adopted—has the Congress passed a mandatory system of standard weights and measures for the country. That chapter of consumer history will be told some other time. Despite the absence of a national mandatory standard, there is enough uniformity in State and local definitions of ounces and inches to facilitate the exchange of billions of pounds and feet of goods year in and year out. How accurately such definitions are observed is a day-to-day concern not only of governments but of all buyers and sellers of goods.

But quantity standards do not stop with definitions of ounces and inches, nor with inspection of weights and

measures. Enormous quantities of goods are neither weighed on scales nor measured with yardsticks before the consumer's eyes as he buys. They come in "barrels or bushels," in baskets and boxes, on spools and bolts. Communities recognized 300 years ago that both sellers and buyers valued an official check of the quantity of goods in these packages. Even then it was deemed necessary to have some kind of regulation of the accuracy of container sizes.

MUCH TIME has gone by since this earliest of American weights and measures law was passed. Trading has become more and more complicated. Selling of goods in packages has multiplied enormously. On the statute books is another kind of regulation which marks a milestone in the march toward a common buyer-seller language: the standardization of container sizes.

Under constitutional powers to fix weights and measures and to regulate interstate commerce, Congress passed in 1912 the Apple Barrel Act, defining the size of barrels which could be used in shipping this fruit. This law was superseded by the Standard Barrel Act in 1915, defining the size of barrels for fruits and vegetables. Then came in 1916 the first so-called Standard Container Act. This Act fixed the sizes of certain kinds of baskets used in the sale of fresh fruits and vegetables. Again in 1928, Congress passed a similar Act, this time fixing sizes of hampers and market baskets. The former law applies to shipments in interstate commerce; the latter, to those within, as well as between States.

Because of such standard container legislation, the number of different sized berry boxes has been reduced from 44 to 3; till baskets, from 40 to 4; climax baskets, from 30 to 4; splint baskets, from 35 to 6; round stave baskets, from 25 to 6; and hampers, from 75 to 9.

Consumers have a large stake in the kind of regulation that simplifies the processes of exchange of goods. Multiplicity of container sizes bewilders not only them, but traders all along the line from grower to ultimate buyer.

It jacks up costs of packaging, shipping, storage, and marketing. Wise traders know their chances of marketing more increase with their success in keeping costs down. In the end consumers pay for inefficiency, as they must foot all bills.

STANDARDIZATION of containers, nevertheless, has been pushed not by consumers but by shippers and by manufacturers of baskets. Shippers saw that container standardization would put vegetable and fruit price quotations on a simpler and more comparable basis. Manufacturers knew that reduction in the number of sizes would enable them to stabilize production, to keep adequate stocks on hand, to standardize machinery, reduce the number of machines necessary for production and cut down inventories in hoops, staves, and other container parts.

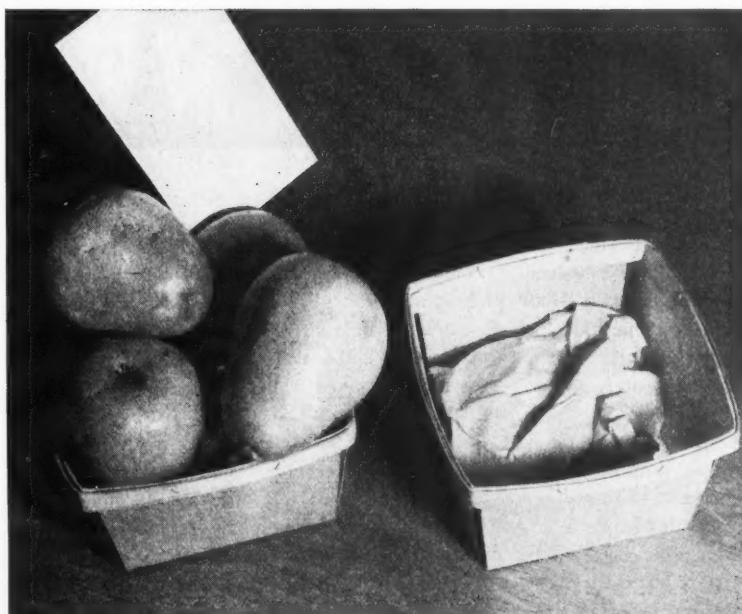
Control of container sizes, under the 1916 and 1928 laws, starts not at the market but back in the factory where

containers are made. The laws require that manufacturers submit the specifications of proposed containers to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture. Bureau experts compare the specifications with the capacities prescribed, and pass on their legality. Inspectors of the Bureau have access to container factories to see that approved specifications are being followed. Manufacturers seem satisfied with a procedure which includes submission for approval and opening of factories to inspection.

Each type of container has its own rules. Most of the fruit and vegetable containers covered by the Standard Container Acts are bigger than consumer-size. But berry boxes and climax baskets are consumer-size containers for which capacities have been defined.

Climax baskets for grapes (and other fruits and vegetables) must come in 2-quart, 4-quart, and 12-quart sizes. A special 1-pound size is authorized for mushrooms.

BERRY AND TILL BASKETS are for small fruits, berries, and vegetables. They are not meant for the sale of larger fruits and vegetables. Federal statutes prescribe the sizes in which such containers may be made, but not the uses dealers may make of them. For that consumers must still watch out for themselves.



14 Baskets and Other Containers for Small Fruits, Berries, and Vegetables



Climax Baskets for Mushrooms, Grapes, Other Fruits and Vegetables



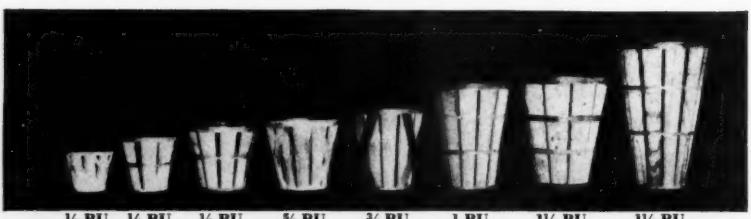
Splint Baskets (square braid, also diamond weave and slab)



Round Stave Baskets



Hampers (2-bushel size omitted)



Standard baskets for berries and small fruits and vegetables come in dry measure units—half pint, pint, quart, and multiples of the quart. Above the single quart, no in-between sizes—units of less than a quart—are permitted.

Other containers are used almost entirely in farm-to-market and grower-to-jobber-to-retailer shipments. Standard sizes for hampers, round stave and straight side baskets, are fixed at 4 quarts, 8 quarts, 16 quarts, 20 quarts, 24 quarts, 1 bushel, 1 1/4 bushels, 1 1/2

bushels, and 2 bushels. Splint or market baskets are standardized in the following sizes: 4 quarts, 8 quarts, 12 quarts, 16 quarts, 24 quarts, 1 bushel. Till baskets are to be made in units of the quart, dry measure.

● **CAPACITIES**, not styles nor shapes (except for climax baskets), are prescribed. In the case of climax baskets dimensions were laid down in the 1916 Act. While the capacity of containers of fresh fruits and vegetables is standardized, styles blossom and fade

and blossom again as temperamentally as designs for women's clothes. In one room alone in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics there are samples of 170 different styles of approved baskets and hampers, all of standard sizes, but varying in design from each other in greater or lesser degree.

Different regions have developed different container styles. Various crops have their own ways of dressing for the journey to market. It is no longer true, as was said before the standardization acts, that "every shipper has his own container." But variety is still striking.

Bound up with container standardization, and container costs, is the moot question of re-use of baskets and boxes. How many times is a container used? Nobody knows. Baskets and hampers sooner or later get into hands from which they do not return. Containers shipped to distant markets do not come back to their shippers. Farmers delivering to nearby markets frequently cart home empty container-for-container for those they have delivered. Berry boxes are seldom filled a second time, except those used to furnish canners, which generally last a full season and make anywhere from 8 to 20 trips.

Resale of used containers is a business. Some concerns which deal in used baskets and hampers sell them by grade—Grade 1 and Grade 2—priced accordingly. Grade 1 containers are often as bright and clean as new.

Experts are cautious about recommending the re-use of containers, however. Not enough unbiased research has been done to settle the question of whether or not plant diseases and insects are transmitted from one basket of peaches or barrel of apples to another, or spread throughout the orchard. When containers go to market more than once, their contents are liable to bring a reduced price which takes away what the farmer saves in the cost of packages. Appearance is tied up with sale value, even on the wholesale market.

Standardization of container capacities is still far from complete. No standards of dimension or capacity are at present fixed for containers of

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The association was founded as a cooperative dairy in 1911. In 1921 a unique agreement was made with the farmers from whom it was buying milk products. The farmers bought stock in the Co-op; and the Co-op agreed to pay patronage dividends on its milk purchases. Rate of these dividends was fixed at one-third of whatever the dividend on consumers' purchases might be for the year—for example, when consumers receive 3 percent on purchases of milk, producers get 1 percent on their sales of milk. On their purchases of groceries, of course, the farmers receive the same refunds as do all other members.

In 1936, 40 farmer-members received from the Cooperative Trading Company \$630 in patronage dividends on their purchases of goods; \$221 in interest on their share capital in the society; and over \$1,200 in patronage dividends on their sales of milk products to the cooperative.

HALF of the savings available for patronage dividends will be devoted to expansion of its services, as a regular policy, it was voted at the annual meeting of the Nebraska Farmers' Union State Exchange.

The operation of branch stores by the Wholesale was frowned upon by the convention. The Exchange, essentially a wholesale for member-stores selling oil and farm and household supplies, now operates several retail branches and oil stations. The Exchange's manager urged delegates to

start their own stores instead of being "spoon-fed cooperators" petitioning the Wholesale to open branch stores in their communities.

Wholesale volume of the Exchange last year came to over \$1,817,000; retail sales to \$1,156,000, making a total of almost 3 million dollars. Net savings for the year were \$60,000. Although sales were some \$200,000 over 1936 figures, savings realized were \$3,800 less.

WHEELS within cooperative wheels may be seen in the report of the Farm Bureau Employees' Credit Union, whose membership numbers 515 of the 795 employees of the Ohio Farm Bureau and its affiliated service cooperatives in Columbus.

Since organizing the credit union in 1931, the Farm Bureau employees have made a total of 2,097 loans to themselves, amounting to \$266,000. During 1937, loans of \$90,000 were made.

The credit union charges its member-borrowers only $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 percent interest a month. At the close of 1937, after required reserves had been set aside, there were still over \$1,500 to be voted in dividends.

To shareholders a 4.4 percent payment was made on their shares. To borrowers a 10 percent patronage refund was made on the interest they had paid on their loans.

THE Adams County, Pennsylvania, Farm Bureau reports that, in addition to doubling its membership, it has helped launch the Adams County Farm Bureau Credit Union. This is said to be the first farmers' credit union established in the State.

"MAKE haste slowly" seems to be the motto of cooperative leaders who are trying to bring about a wider under-

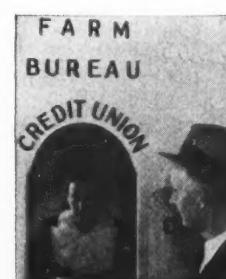
standing of the principles and problems of consumer co-ops. So they advocate small discussion groups. Says the Eastern Cooperative League in a letter to discussion group leaders:

"Why are small groups more efficient in cooperative discussions for action? First, the discussion circle limited to about 8 or 10 persons, gives each individual the stimulus to think and to express himself. Second, the smaller the group the more frequent the opportunity for each to raise questions or state opinions. Third, it affords a somewhat painless and effective method for changing one's mind or revising his ideas and opinions. Fourth, we are more ready to carry out an idea or a plan which we have helped to create. Fifth, is the ease and quickness with which the small informal group comes to grip with individual questions and problems."

Not averse to modern methods, while shying away from bigness, the Eastern Cooperative League on February 3 began its Discussion School of the Air. The discussion group that broadcasts for 15 minutes over one of New York's smaller stations uses no written script. Members of the group argue extemporaneously for 12 of the 15 minutes. Then the leader summarizes and outlines what remains to be discussed. Just before the group goes off the air some expert on the discussion method criticizes method and technique of the session.

Local groups who listen at their radios then turn themselves into discussion circles and carry forward. They send in to the League questions they would like to see the broadcast take up the following week.

IN A TOWN of 7,000 people, the United Cooperative Society of May-



nard, Mass., reports it did over half a million dollars' worth of business in 1937. The Co-op, which is Maynard's biggest retail establishment, had savings of \$20,500 available for distribution. The annual meeting voted \$17,000 for patronage refunds, in which both members and non-members will participate, to the tune of 3½ percent on their purchases during the year.

IOWA FARMERS are operating 1,952 marketing, purchasing and service cooperatives, according to the preliminary report of an Iowa State College marketing specialist who is taking the first complete census of the State's co-op organizations.

Cooperative marketing and purchasing alone, by 1,102 of the co-ops, amounted to about 120 million dollars in 1937. For the other 850 societies—cooperative electric companies, insurance mutuals and telephone mutuals—the survey did not gauge business volume.

Increased co-op business and more members, with fewer actual operating units, was the survey author's prediction for the near future. "The trend is definitely toward larger cooperatives. Some of the smaller co-ops have already dropped out or been absorbed."

MEETING GROUND for cooperative leaders and cooperative ideas, every two years, is the Congress of the Cooperative League of the United States. Next biennial congress has just been set for October 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1938. The Consumers' Cooperative Association—big regional wholesale—will be host at its headquarters at North Kansas City, Mo.

Representatives of some 800,000 members of organizations affiliated with the national League are due at the convention, the eleventh meeting since founding of the League in 1916. Last meeting was held in 1936 at Columbus, Ohio, with Ohio Farm Bureau cooperators doing the honors.

OVER a quarter of a million dollars' net savings in a dozen years, is the rec-

ord of the Farmers' Elevator Service Co., with headquarters at Ralston, Ia. Almost every Farmers' Elevator in Iowa is said to be a member now, although only a few bought their \$10 membership shares for cash. Most shares were paid for out of savings earned by the local elevators. Last year's report for the year ending November 1937 showed gains of \$42,322—making the best year's showing yet for the organization.

VOTING a patronage refund of 3 percent on 1937 business, the board of trustees of the Columbus, Ohio, Consumers' Cooperative, Inc., declared the refund payable not in cash but in certificates of indebtedness bearing 4 percent interest and payable in 5 years. On refunds amounting to less than 5 dollars, no interest will be paid.

Total sales at the co-op's grocery and oil station and from a commission service during 1937 were \$90,000. Net savings were just above \$2,515. Membership in the organization is over 900.

As with many other young cooperatives, the Columbus society finds that its problem is "one of volume," since it states that it could take care of a 50 percent increase in business with almost no additional operating expense.

A GROUP of mothers at Ashtabula, Ohio, working on a sewing project for the unemployed, talked over the situation in which their children were going without dental examination and treatment because of their parents' lack of steady employment. After study of various possible plans, they set up a dental cooperative, in collaboration with interested local dentists.

All children of school age in a single family may get complete dental care for \$7 a year; adults in the family complete service for another \$7. An entire family may thus cooperate to insure itself protection for \$14 a year, plus the initial membership fee of \$1.

NORTH CAROLINA farmers took stock of conditions under which they were growing and selling Irish pota-

toes, and decided to see what cooperative activity could do to improve things. . . . Of 171 growers interviewed in a survey in the eastern part of the State, 9 out of 10 cited "two distinct handicaps when producing and marketing their potatoes," according to a recent report by the Farm Credit Administration. These handicaps were "first, the lack of contacts with competitive buyers, and second, the wide margins between credit and cash prices for supplies being charged by credit agencies. These growers believed that a cooperative marketing program and a system making possible the cash purchase of supplies would improve their position."

Organization followed investigation. One hundred and sixty growers, producing some 2,400 acres of potatoes, enrolled. Their potato-marketing organization then tied up with the statewide Farmers' Cooperative Exchange (better known as the FCX), which is chiefly engaged in purchasing farm supplies.

The FCX buys supplies for potato production—fertilizer, seed, bags, barrel covers—and distributes them through its local warehouses at wholesale cash prices, plus the cost of handling. Production credit associations in the various districts make funds available to growers for this cash purchasing.

Marketing is handled by the fruit and vegetable department of the FCX. This department assembles, grades and packages the potatoes; sells on a commission basis, and remits to the growers. For marketing purposes, the FCX fruit and vegetable department has joined the American National Cooperative Exchange.

Says the FCX manager: "Our entry into the cooperative marketing of potatoes is merely another step toward our avowed goal of helping farmers to increase their income. . . .

"Growers may now go to their own Production Credit Associations, borrow the money needed at 5 percent interest, and then buy seed and fertilizer of known quality cooperatively at a fair margin."

Your Food Supplies and Costs

HIGHLIGHTS

Bigger supplies this spring than last are expected in: better-grade beef, spring lamb, hogs, butter, apples, oranges, dried beans, fats and oils.

Fresh fruit and vegetable prices are running 29 percent below last year's.

Low price season for eggs is here.

White bread remains at its highest average price since 1929, where it has been since last June.

ALL FOODS A slight increase—the first since last September—was reported for March. Food costs of workingmen's families on March 15, 1938, stood at 78.6 percent of their 1923–1925 level. This was 0.2 percent higher than February 15, 1938, costs, but 8 percent lower than last March and 1 percent lower than March 1936.

All types of food, except cereals and bakery products, were selling for less in March this year than last. Biggest drop—29 percent—was in fresh fruits and vegetables. Prices of cereal and bakery products averaged the same this March as last.

FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Bountiful apple and orange supplies are expected to mean continued bargain prices for these fruits during May. Both are selling for about one-third less than in March 1937. Apple storage stocks—sole source of supplies until 1938's crop matures in summer—are the largest on record. Orange crops in Florida and California are much larger than last year.

May signals peak marketings of strawberries and rhubarb. First shipments of peaches, sweet corn, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and plums are due. Cherries and cantaloupes, starting to market in late April, increase sharply in May.

Expect important increases in supplies during May of these vegetables: lettuce, tomatoes, new potatoes, Bermuda onions, green peas, cucumbers, spinach, and scallions. As supplies increase, prices usually move down.

Major price decreases from February to March this year occurred in cabbage, spinach, onions, and string beans. Compared with a year ago prices of string beans, celery, lettuce, and sweet-potatoes were down about one-fifth, potatoes about 43 percent lower.

MEATS First advance— $2\frac{1}{2}$ percent—in the average level of meat costs since last fall occurred between February and March. At latest count, meat cost 17 percent less than at the peak last fall, 3 percent less than in March 1937.

Major increases between February and March this year were in pork roast, pork chops, and all cuts of lamb. Minor advances were made in the more expensive cuts of beef.

All meats, except veal cutlets and lamb, were selling in March this year much below prices of last March. Major reductions were in more expensive beef cuts and cured pork products.

PORK New year for hog marketing opens on October 1. Between now and then, the number of hogs slaughtered is expected to be greater than in 1937. Market supplies

come from slaughterings and cold storage. Small cold storage holdings may cancel the gains from increased slaughter. Prices appear to have passed their spring peak. They may trend downward until the end of the summer when a seasonal advance, much smaller than in 1937, is in prospect.

BEEF Bigger supplies of better grade beef are expected during the spring. Prices may ease off a little more until they hit bottom in June or July. Supplies probably will be much larger and prices lower than last spring.

LAMB Spring lambs are now being shipped to market. Bigger supplies should come in May and June. Their total will be considerably larger than a year ago. Prices of spring lamb are expected to be well below last year's level. They usually come higher than prices of grain-fed lambs, the kind



that has made up the bulk of supplies during recent months.

POULTRY

Broiler season opens in April and prices usually move down in the spring and summer. Broilers ordinarily are young cockerels weighing from 1½ to 2½ pounds. While broiler prices probably will be less than a year ago, prices of roasting chickens are not expected to drop below their 1937 level until mid-year. Retail prices of roasting chickens fell off slightly from mid-February to mid-March but were 13 percent higher than a year ago.

EGGS Eggs were selling in March at 3½ percent less than in February, 11 percent less than in March a year ago. Eggs usually come cheapest in spring months—March and April—and climb sharply after June.

Egg production after the late spring is not expected to be up to its 1937 level. Consequently, summer and fall prices may be higher than a year ago.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

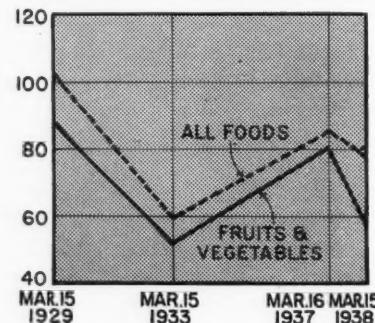
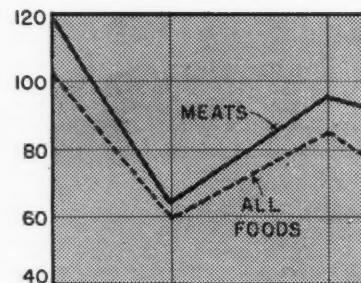
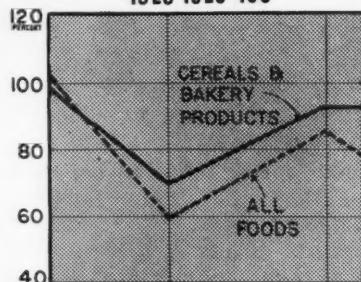
Fresh milk showed only a trifling change in price in March, compared with February. Compared with a year ago, its average cost is 2 percent higher. Butter and cheese are cheaper than in February and a year ago. Butter is down 11 percent, cheese 3 percent, from March 1937 prices.

Butter production will probably continue higher than in 1937 during the spring and summer. Prices are expected to remain under last year's. Additional declines are in prospect until the seasonal low point is reached, probably in June.

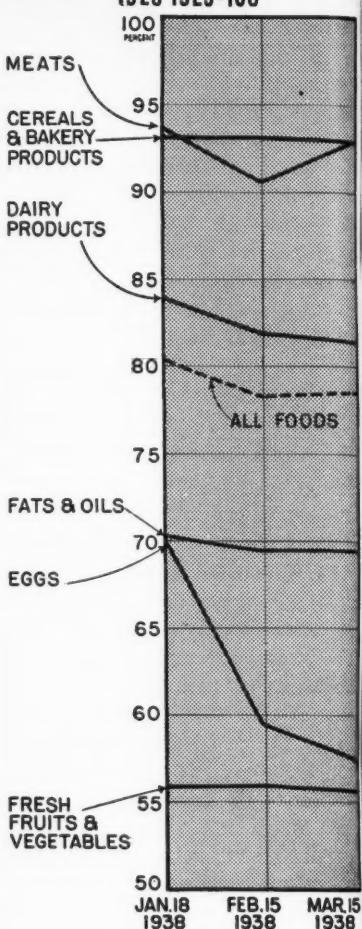
CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS

For the first time this year, the average retail cost of cereals and bakery products did not stand above its 1937 level. Major drops from a year ago show up in prices of wheat flour, cornmeal, hominy grits, and rice. Bread prices have remained unchanged since last June. In March 1938, white bread cost 5 percent more and rye and whole-wheat bread 3 percent more than in March 1937. White-bread prices remain at the level reached last June which is the highest since 1929.

A PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD COST CHANGES 1923-1925=100



A CLOSE-UP OF FOOD COST CHANGES 1923-1925=100



HOW MARCH FOOD COSTS COMPARE

	With costs 1 year ago*	With costs 2 years ago
All foods	8% down	1% down
Cereals, bakery products	0	1% up
Dairy products	3% down	2% up
Eggs	11% down	14% down
Fats and oils	14% down	8% down
Fruits and vegetables, fresh	29% down	6% down
Fruits and vegetables, canned	4% down	1% up
Meats	3% down	1% down

*Remember: 1 year ago many prices reflected drought conditions.

FATS AND OILS Major price drops show up in average prices of lard, lard compounds, vegetable shortening, and oleomargarine as compared with last year's prices. Lard costs in March were 22 percent less, lard compounds

20 percent less, vegetable shortening 11 percent less, and oleomargarine 10 percent less than in March 1937. Mayonnaise has increased 3 percent over a year ago. Lard and vegetable shortening prices are at their lowest level since 1934.

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AGRICULTURE'S NEW ROAD MAPS

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Too abundant fruit and vegetable supplies may result in orders that call for a limitation on the total amount of a product which may be shipped. Sometimes the order will provide that a percentage of the supply shall be diverted into other channels. Shipping holidays may be the device used to relieve overglutted city markets. Other orders may keep small, low-grade products off the market.

WHEN SUPPLIES of foods cannot be salvaged by any of these devices and farmers are threatened with major losses, the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation may step in and buy up a quantity for distribution to families on relief. The funds for such purpose come out of customs receipts. This salvaging job has been done for billions of pounds of farm products since its initiation in 1933. Wherever possible, purchases are made directly from farmers, but care is taken to see that farmers receive some indirect, if not direct, benefit from them.

Sugar growers have their special help under the 1937 Sugar Act which protects them from lower priced imported sugar and provides them with benefit payments on condition they keep within their quota, pay certain minimum wages to their labor, and do not use child labor. Sugar growers also get payments for conserving soil.

Translating all these agricultural programs into reality imposes grave responsibilities both on farmers and on the AAA which directs their plans. Even within the limits laid down in the various Acts there is need of accurate disinterested judgment and service.

From the farmers, this is essential. They are the ones who, in county and State committees, help in the work of establishing conservation goals for each farm; of apportioning allotments under the new AAAct; of voting on restricting supplies through marketing quotas. Never before have farmers been so challenged to prove their capacity for sharing responsibilities and submerging their regional interests.

An equally difficult job rests with

the AAA which administers or counsels in the administration of these farm Acts. On the accuracy of its estimates of consumer needs, of reasonable farm prices, of desirable reserves, rest not only the fortunes of farmers but the well being of consumers.

Congress has provided in the new AAAct, as it did in the Soil Conservation Act in 1936, that the powers of this Act shall not be used to discourage production of the quantity of foods and fibers normally consumed at home. In decisions on the relative needs of farmers and consumers, consumers share with farmers an obligation to see that the farm program results in the greatest good to the greatest number.

One-third of our Nation, the President warns, is ill-nourished. When farmers plan to control their production, what are they doing to hurt or help these 40 million people?

There are only 2 ways of getting a good diet to the people who cannot now afford it. One way is to give food to the needy. This can be done if the Nation demands it. But if the country were to underwrite a policy of giving away food to the people who do not now get enough or the right kinds of food, it would have to change the economic system under which not only farming but all industry operates.

SHORT OF CHANGING the Nation's system of production and distribution there is no sound method for getting a better diet to the ill-nourished "third" than that of helping them to earn more money. Cutting the price of food severely enough to bring a good diet within reach of miserably small incomes would bankrupt farmers and precipitate a serious business collapse.

Here are some startling figures. To make any kind of dent in the subnormal food consumption of a considerable part of the population, retail food prices would have to be reduced about 30 percent. If retail prices were slashed that much below their level in 1937 farm prices would have to average about 15 percent below their ruinous level of 1932. The desperate condition of farmers that year cost city workers billions of dollars in lost jobs and lowered wages.

Farm income can be prevented from dragging down city incomes if farm production is held to the quantities which consumers take. Malnutrition can be wiped out if city incomes are brought up. This is the responsibility of industry and commerce. To the extent that they, like farmers, achieve a balanced production with full employment, malnutrition will decrease and farmers will be justified in expanding production above present normal supplies.

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STANDARDIZING CONTAINERS

[Concluded from page 14]

canned fruit or vegetables. Not covered by any Federal standard are sacks, crates, boxes, and paper cartons. Some States have established standard sizes for these container types. But the receivers and jobbers of fruits and vegetables still complain of a multiplicity of sizes which leads to confusion and deception.

Sellers sometimes woo consumer favor with little paper board baskets in which tomatoes or mushrooms or other foods are beguilingly arrayed. No law prescribes the size, shape, or fill of these boxes or baskets. When the box is bedded with flossy papers to make it appear to hold more food than it actually does, the careful buyer knows that some of his food money may go to pay for decoration. There is no legal definition of what makes a container full. But by commercial custom the "heap" of the open container is part of the "fill."

"Watch the scales," is still a good buy-word for purchasers of fruits and vegetables not sold in their original containers nor by the piece or dozen. The customer who would protest loudly at being given 11 oranges for a dozen sometimes never gives a glance to the scales that can shortweight. He has himself to blame—provided his local inspection service is on the job—if he carries home less food than he pays for.

Our thanks are due to the Farm Security Administration for the following photographs: Cover, top; page 3; page 4, top; page 5, center; page 7.

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